

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
DISTRICT OF SOUTH CAROLINA

Rebecca Myers, #270339,  
aka Rebecca Lynn Myers,

Petitioner,

vs.

Catherine Kendall,

Respondents.

C/A No. 2:08-3405-HFF-RSC

Report and Recommendation

Petitioner files this matter pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 2254 challenging her 2000 conviction and sentence for murder and accessory after the fact to burglary. Petitioner is currently an inmate at Leath Correctional Institution. She is serving life without parole on the murder charge and fifteen (15) years concurrent on the accessory charge. She did not appeal her guilty plea or her sentence.

She filed an application for post-conviction relief which was denied in June 2002. She sought review in the South Carolina Supreme Court. Her attorney filed a petition for writ of certiorari pursuant to *Johnson v. State*, 364 S.E.2d 201 (S.C. 1988), and moved to withdraw. The court denied the petition and granted counsel's motion in June 2003.

Petitioner filed a petition for writ of habeas corpus in this court in September 2004. It was recommended that the petition be dismissed because it was filed after the running of the statute of limitations. The report and recommendation was adopted by the

United States District Judge assigned to the case. See *Myers v. South Carolina Department of Corrections, et al.*, Civil Action No. 2:04-22212-26AJ. Petitioner filed an appeal. The Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals denied a certificate of appealability and dismissed the appeal. See *Myers v. South Carolina Department of Corrections, et al.*, 133 Fed. Appx. 917, 2005 WL 1412159 (4<sup>th</sup> Cir. 2005) (unpublished).

Petitioner now files a second petition for habeas corpus challenging the same convictions and sentences.

Under established local procedure in this judicial district, a careful review has been made of the *pro se* petition, pursuant to the procedural provisions of 28 U.S.C. § 1915, 28 U.S.C. § 1915A, and the Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996. The review has been conducted in light of the following precedents: *Denton v. Hernandez*, 504 U.S. 25, 60 U.S.L.W. 4346, 118 L.Ed.2d 340, 112 S.Ct. 1728, (1992); *Neitzke v. Williams*, 490 U.S. 319, 324-325, (1989); *Haines v. Kerner*, 404 U.S. 519 (1972); *Nasim v. Warden, Maryland House of Correction*, 64 F.3d 951, (1995); and *Todd v. Baskerville*, 712 F.2d 70 (4th Cir. 1983). This court is required to construe *pro se* complaints and petitions liberally. Such *pro se* complaints and petitions are held to a less stringent standard than those drafted by attorneys, *Gordon v. Leeke*, 574 F.2d 1147, 1151 (4th Cir.), and a federal district court is charged with liberally construing a complaint or petition filed by a *pro se* litigant to allow the development of a potentially meritorious

case. See *Hughes v. Rowe*, 449 U.S. 5, 9 (1980); and *Cruz v. Beto*, 405 U.S. 319 (1972). When a federal court is evaluating a *pro se* complaint or petition, the plaintiff's or petitioner's allegations are assumed to be true. *Fine v. City of New York*, 529 F.2d 70, 74 (2nd Cir. 1975). However, even under this less stringent standard, the petition submitted in the above-captioned case is subject to summary dismissal. The requirement of liberal construction does not mean that the court can ignore a clear failure in the pleading to allege facts which set forth a claim currently cognizable in a federal district court. *Weller v. Department of Social Services*, 901 F.2d 387, (4th Cir. 1990).

With respect to her convictions and sentences, the petitioner's sole federal remedy is a writ of habeas corpus under 28 U.S.C. § 2254, which can be sought only after the petitioner has exhausted her state court remedies. See 28 U.S.C. § 2254(b); *Picard v. Connor*, 404 U.S. 270 (1971); and *Braden v. 30th Judicial Circuit Court*, 410 U.S. 484, 490-491 (1973) (exhaustion required under 28 U.S.C. § 2241). Petitioner has exhausted her state court remedies, however, her claims have already been presented to this court.

As noted above, the petitioner has had one prior § 2254 habeas corpus action in this court. This court may take judicial notice of the petitioner's prior § 2254 case. See *Aloe Creme Laboratories, Inc. v. Francine Co.*, 425 F.2d 1295, 1296 (5th Cir. 1970).

Summary judgment for the respondents was granted in the petitioner's prior § 2254 case. As a result, the § 2254 petition in the above-captioned case is subject to dismissal under Rule 9 of the Section 2254 Rules. *Miller v. Bordenkircher*, 764 F.2d 245, 248-250 & nn. 3-5 (4th Cir. 1985). See also *McClesky v. Zant*, 499 U.S. 467 (1991); Section 106 of the Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996, Public Law 104-132, 110 U.S.Stat. 1214; *Bennett v. Angelone*, 92 F.3d 1336 (4th Cir. 1996); and *Armstead v. Parke*, 930 F. Supp. 1285 (N.D.Ind. 1996).

In any event, there is no indication that the petitioner has sought leave from the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit to file the § 2254 petition in the above-captioned case. Leave from the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit is now required under the Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996 for filers of successive or second § 2254 petitions. Before the petitioner attempts to file another petition in the United States District Court for the District of South Carolina, she *must* seek and obtain leave (*i.e.*, written permission) from the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit. The petitioner can obtain the necessary forms for doing so from the Clerk's Office of the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit in Richmond, Virginia.

#### RECOMMENDATION

Accordingly, it is recommended that the § 2254 petition in the above-captioned case be dismissed *without prejudice* as a successive

§ 2254 petition under Rule 9 of the Section 2254 Rules, without requiring the respondents to file a return. See *Allen v. Perini*, 424 F.2d 134, 141 (6th Cir. 1970) (federal district courts have duty to screen habeas corpus petitions and eliminate burden placed on respondents caused by ordering an unnecessary answer or return); and the Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996.

Respectfully Submitted,



Robert S. Carr  
United States Magistrate Judge

Date 12/12/08  
Charleston, South Carolina

The petitioner's attention is directed to the important notice on the next page.

### **Notice of Right to File Objections to Report and Recommendation**

The parties are advised that they may file specific written objections to this Report and Recommendation with the District Court Judge. Objections must specifically identify the portions of the Report and Recommendation to which objections are made and the basis for such objections. In the absence of a timely filed objection, a district court judge need not conduct a de novo review, but instead must "only satisfy itself that there is no clear error on the face of the record in order to accept the recommendation." *Diamond v. Colonial Life & Acc. Ins. Co.*, 416 F.3d 310 (4<sup>th</sup> Cir. 2005).

Specific written objections must be filed within ten (10) days of the date of service of this Report and Recommendation. 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1); Fed. R. Civ. P. 72(b). The time calculation of this ten-day period excludes weekends and holidays and provides for an additional three (3) days for filing by mail. Fed. R. Civ. P. 6(a) & (e). Filing by mail pursuant to Fed. R. Civ. P. 5 may be accomplished by mailing objections to:

Larry W. Propes, Clerk  
United States District Court  
P.O. Box 835  
Charleston, South Carolina 29402

**Failure to timely file specific written objections to this Report and Recommendation will result in waiver of the right to appeal from a judgment of the District Court based upon such Recommendation.** 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1); *Thomas v. Arn*, 474 U.S. 140 (1985); *United States v. Schronce*, 727 F.2d 91 (4th Cir. 1984); *Wright v. Collins*, 766 F.2d 841 (4th Cir. 1985).